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epic

ILLUSTRATED

Premiere Issue

A new experience
in adult fantasy
and science-fiction
adventure



1077-079



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epic

ILLUSTRATED

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advertising
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circulation
Edward Shukin

public relations
Pamela Ruff

subscriptions
Kathy Nuzzolese

offices
575 Madison Avenue
New York, NY 10022
Tel. (212) 838-7900
Telex no. 238961

editorial

The Next Plateau

Forgive us if we sound presumptuous but EPIC ILLUSTRATED is more, far more, than merely another new magazine. EPIC heralds the dramatic start of a new era in publishing, an era which proudly presents the long-awaited managed of superb illustration and the best in imaginative fiction.

We live in a visual era, a visual society. Motion pictures, television, multimedia productions of every type comprise the very fabric of today's communications. Not only have we learned full well that a picture is worth a thousand words, but we've also learned that the proper combination of the two can result in a creative entertainment experience unmatched by any other format. Words and pictures—stories and books—truly, the cornerstones of knowledge, the basis of the legends which have ever thrilled mankind.

Sell, there are many types of stories, many types of books. We at Marvel have built a modern publishing empire based upon one special type, and upon one flexible goal—we have always striven to create the most imaginative, the most unusual, the most fantastic and provocative tales of all.

Yet, so great has been the advancement of science, that the dividing line between truth and fiction, fact and fantasy, grows ever thinner. Yesterday's science fiction has become today's accepted fact. But the ability of man to dream, to fantasize, will always outstrip his equally awesome ability to transform those dreams to glorious reality.

Here at EPIC we are the gatherers of the dreams. No concept is too far-fetched, no theme is too far-out. There are no caveats, no taboos, no prohibitions or restrictions which our artists and writers need observe, just as there are no such limitations to what the human brain can conceive. Governed only by our own personal com-



mitment to quality and good taste, the entire universe is just for our creative mill, and each superbly printed and illustrated issue is certain to become a valued collector's item the moment the copies have gone off-sale.

In two short decades, Marvel Comics has revolutionized the once-simplistic, uniform known as comic books. But what is past is merely prelude. Today, we stand at the threshold of a spectacular new undertaking, a project to which we dedicate our total energies, talents, and resources. Today, EPIC is the realization of a daring dream. Tomorrow, it will be the prelude of a new form of publishing, a new form of art, a new form of literary communication, and—most intriguing of all—it will lead us along the fascinating trail of fantasy and saga, perhaps further than we have ever gone before!

FEEDBACK

letters & comments

For our premiere issue, we set writer Tom Rogers the task of soliciting comments from various well-known folk on the potential of a magazine like EPIC. In the future, this page will become a forum for your suggestions, opinions, questions, and criticisms. At the same time, we should be able to supply you with some of the hows, whys, and wherefores of putting together an on-going project like this. Hopefully, what we'll wind up with will be a dialogue between us. And through that dialogue, we hope EPIC will be a better magazine.

Archie Goodwin, editorial director

Neal Adams

comics artist, paperback and advertising illustrator, head of Continuity Associates art studio, member of the Ad Hoc committee for the Comics Creators Guild

☛ If Marvel Comics will make the type of contract that will guarantee the rights of the creative people working on *Epic Illustrated*, it will be something that will be a milestone in comic history. There is so much creative talent in the world, and if the writers and artists are given the freedom to do what they want to do, with that kind of contract, for that kind of publication, then potentially they can end up having the greatest magazine, or magazines, that has ever been produced. Marvel can do it, given the right contract, and the end result will be worth it. The potential is so great that, frankly, it's hard for me to even think of it. If Marvel can put together the right kind of situation, I feel that the untapped material that is available is truly vast, and it's just waiting for the right conditions to come along. There can be better stuff than we've ever had before, resulting in the type of fantastic comic book illustrations that make

your heart beat faster. I think it could work out extremely well. ☛

Ray Bradbury

Author of *Fahrenheit 451*, *The Illustrated Man*, and *The Martian Chronicles*, which has recently been adapted into an NBC-TV mini-series

☛ To begin with, you have a very good selection of writers and artists. The concept for *Epic Illustrated* sounds exciting, but it depends on how well you do it. I'm somewhat familiar with Marvel Comics, and this is something new for them, apparently. With science-fiction films doing as well as they've been doing, and with the reprints of the old EC comics seeming to do well because people are going back and seeing some of the good work that was done, and with science fiction being taught in schools all the time now, I should think that you'd have a fairly large market. Somewhere along the line, it would be fascinating to pick a story of mine, and an illustrator that we all like, and adapt it to your magazine. I would love to see it succeed. I admire your courage, and it sounds like you're using your imagination. I look forward to seeing it. ☛

George Pal

Film producer of *Destination Moon*, *War of the Worlds*, *The Time Machine*, and *The Seven Faces of Dr. Lao*

☛ It sounds delightful. I am familiar a little with the magazine *Heavy Metal*, and I think you will make it better. I would be very interested in it, myself, because I am a big fan of science fiction. I am working on a new movie now, and my novel—a sequel to *The Time Machine*—will be out next year. I might like to do something for your publication someday. I think that there is a defi-

nite market for this sort of thing, and I feel that your company can handle it properly. I wish you very good luck. ☛

Joseph Stefano

Author of the screenplay for Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* and co-creator and producer of the TV anthology series, *The Outer Limits*

☛ Short text stories, together with illustrated ones. That sounds like a very good idea. I haven't been doing any of that kind of reading for a few years, since I was involved with *The Outer Limits*. However, I have found from my own experience that the science fiction/fantasy field has a tremendous appeal. Consequently, it's a very crowded field. What you suggest, though, is not overdone at this time. The magazines of this sort that I have seen tend to be very well done, and apparently yours will at least be equal to them. I wish you a lot of luck on this. ☛

Ian Summers

art director; author of *The Fantastic Art of the Brothers Hildebrandt*, and editor of *Tonorrow and Beyond*

☛ I think it's a damn good concept. I think what you're doing is going after a lot of the Heavy Metal audience, and, I hope, in the right tasteful vein. Not only is there room for the magazine, but I think that it could do very well. I feel, absolutely, that it would succeed. I just hope that you keep the taste level up as high as you possibly can. If so, it has to succeed. I don't see how it can fail. ☛

All letters intended for this column should be addressed to:

Feedback
Epic Illustrated
375 Madison Avenue, 6th Floor
New York, New York 10022

“If Marvel can put together the right kind of situation there can be better stuff than we've ever had before, the kind of fantastic comic book illustrations that make your heart beat faster.”

THE ANSWER



THE PLANET IS NAMELESS. IT NEEDS NO NAME. NONE CAN FIND IT. NONE CAN REACH IT. NONE CAN TRUD ITS LONG - DEAD SURFACE. NONE BUT TWO. THESE TWO. THIS IS THEIR STORY.

WE STAND ON THE MOST REMOTE ASTEROID IN ALL THE UNIVERSE AND YET--

THE MYSTERY REMAINS. WHAT LIES BEYOND? WHERE DOES IT END?

A TALE OF THE SILVER SURFER

WE HAVE COME
THIS FAR. WE MUST
GO FURTHER. WE
MUST LEARN THE
ANSWER.



NONE THAT LIVE CAN KNOW
THE ANSWER.

NOT
EVEN
YOU?



I AM GALACTUS,
THOUGH I AM MORE
THAN MAN, STILL AM
I LESS THAN GOD

AND I AM BUT YOUR
HERALD--LESS THAN
A FLEETING FLYSPARK
ON THE ENDLESS
TAPESTRY OF SPACE

BUT EVEN A
FLYSPARK CAN
YEARN TO KNOW--
TO DISCOVER--
TO LEARN THE
ANSWER



THERE
IS NO
ANSWER



YOU LIE! THERE IS NO PERFECT SECRET! THERE IS NO LOCK WITHOUT A KEY!



I AM A STRANGER TO UNTRUTH. MINE IS THE POWER ABSOLUTE. GALACTUS HAS NO CAUSE TO LIE.

THEN JOIN ME IN THE QUEST LET US SEE WHAT LIES BEYOND THE COSMOS ONLY WE CAN FIND THE ANSWER



THERE IS NO ANSWER

I SPEAK THE TRUTH, AND YET, I KNOW THE SHAWING DOUBT, THE SEETHING AGONY THAT BURNS WITHIN YOUR BREAST. IN AGES PAST, GALACTUS, TOO, HAS FELT SUCH YEARNING.

SO, THEN, SEEK THE ANSWER IF YOU MUST.



I MUST

THE POWER COSMIC IS MINE TO COMMAND... TO STRIP AWAY THE FINAL VEIL OF DARKNESS.

AT LAST I'LL SEE WHAT LIES BEYOND THE FARTHEST EDGE--WHAT LIES BEYOND THE BRINK OF TIME ITSELF





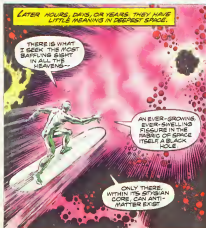
SO HERALD, LEARN
FOR YOURSELF AS I
HAVE LEARNED

THERE
IS NO
ANGER



I'LL GO WHERE
NONE HAVE EVER
BEEN. I'LL SEE
WHAT NONE HAVE
EVER SEEN.

AND I'LL NOT
TURN BACK—
THOUGH DEATH
ITSELF SHOULD
BAR THE WAY



LATER, HOURS, DAYS, OR YEARS THEY HAVE
LITTLE MEANING IN DEEPEST SPACE.

THERE IS WHAT
I SEEK, THE MOST
BAPPLING SIGHT
IN ALL THE
HEAVENS—

AN EVER-GROWING
EVER-SWELLING
FIGURE IN THE
FABRIC OF SPACE
ITSELF, A BLACK
HOLE

ONLY THERE,
WITHIN ITS STYGHIAN
CORE, CAN ANTI-
MATTER EXIST



ONLY THERE
WILL I FIND THE
ENTRANCE TO
ANOTHER UNIVERSE
—THE SECRET
OF INFINITY



HOW CAN WE, WITH MERELY MORTAL
EYES, REVEAL THE UNREVEALABLE?
HOW CAN YOU, WITH MERELY MORTAL
EYES, BEHOLD THE UNBEHOLDABLE?

WHAT YOU SEE BEFORE YOU IS BUT A
PALE AND GINGERBREAD REPRESENTATION
OF THE MOST INDESCRIBABLY AWESOME
JOURNEY EVER LIVED



I'M DRAWN INTO
A FROZEN,
BURNING Maelstrom
OF LIVING
NOTHINGNESS

ALL
AROUND ME—
POWER, SUCH AS NONE
HAVE EVER KNOWN,
CHURNING, BLINDING,
DEAFENING POWER,
WITHOUT LIMIT,
WITHOUT LET

DEEPER AND DEEPER
IT SUCKS ME INTO THE
SWIRLING, SCREAMING
CENTER—TOWARDS
THE VERY HEART OF
THE MONSTROUS,
ALIEN VOID.

AGAIN, IN A PLACE SUCH AS
THIS, MORE TIME CAN HAVE
NO MEANING. IT IS ENOUGH
TO SAY--THE VOYAGER
ENDURES, UNTIL AT LAST...

ONLY MY POWER COSMIC
COULD HAVE SHIELDED ME
FROM FORCES BEYOND
HUMAN COMPREHENSION

BUT NOW, THE
PRESSURE EASES.
MY SPEED SLACKENS
THE JOURNEY
NEARS ITS END.

ALL IS QUIET
I'VE REACHED
MY GOAL...

WHEN NEXT MY
EYES ARE OPENED,
I'LL BEHOLD WHAT
MAN HAS NEVER
SEEN.

AND NOW, TO GAZE UPON
THE ANSWER TO THE RIDDLE
OF THE UNIVERSE...

NO
NO
NO

WHAT MADNESS
IS THIS? WAS
IT ALL IN VAIN?



IS THE UNIVERSE
ITSELF NOTHING
MORE THAN AN
ETERNAL, COSMIC
JEST?

OR, BY SOME
POWER KNOWN ONLY
TO YOURSELF, HAVE
YOU REACHED THE
GOAL BEFORE ME?



THERE IS NO
GOAL. I
HAVE NOT
MOVED.



IT CANNOT BE!
THERE MUST BE
SOMETHING—
SOMEWHERE—

I TRIED TO WARN YOU.



WARN ME
OF WHAT?
SPEAK,
GALACTUS.



MAN HAS ALWAYS KNOWN THE ANSWER.
HAS IT NOT BEEN CHRONICLED IN SCRIPTURE,
SONG, AND LEGEND SINCE THE DAWN
OF TIME?

TIME AND SPACE
ARE ONE. HERE IS
THERE. THEN IS
NOW. AND GOD
IS ALL.

AT LAST I
UNDERSTAND.

I SEARCHED FOR
A PLACE. BUT THERE
IS NO PLACE.

THE
ANSWER
LIES—
WITHIN
US.





ONCE, THESE TINY, SEXLESS BEINGS CALLED
THEMSELVES THE PRESERVERS...

BUT THAT WAS VERY LONG AGO, WHEN THEY COULD
STILL REMEMBER WHO AND WHY THEY WERE!

NOW THEY SPIN THEIR
SHIMMERING WEBS
WITHOUT ANYONE
OR REASON --

--AND THE VERDANT VALLEY IN WHICH
THEY DWELL IS SILVERED OVER WITH
MYRIAD LUSTROUS COCOONS!

COCOONS WHICH THE PRESERVERS
TEND WITH INFINITE CARE --

--BUT WHICH NEVER,
NEVER HATCH!

WHUZZAT?!

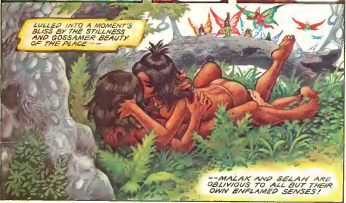
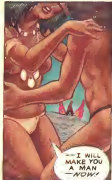
SKRASH!

THUD THUD

(GASP!)

BIG THINGS!





SUDDENLY...

AROooooo AROooooo

OH! MY FATHER'S HUNTING HORN!

HE KNOWS WE ARE HERE!

D-DO YOU THINK HE WILL BREAK TABOO AND ENTER THE FORBIDDEN GROVE?

WE DID..!

THEIR TRAIL IS CLEAR!

WE HAVE ONLY TO FOLLOW!

I WILL KILL MALAK WITH MY OWN HANDS WHEN I CATCH HIM!

OLBAR THE MOUNTAINOUS SOUNDS THE NOTES THAT SIGNAL CORNERED PREY!

HIS ANGER IS AS GREAT AS HIS STATURE, FOR SELAH HAS DARED TO DEFY HIM!

WAIT, OLBAR! WHAT OF THE DEMONS THAT DWELL HERE?

WE DARE NOT RISK THEIR ANGER!

YES! MALAK AND SELAH MAY ALREADY HAVE PAID FOR DISTURBING THEM!

THEN LET THE DEMONS BEWARE OLBAR!!

I WILL HEAR NO MORE WARNINGS!

FOLLOW!!

THEY COME! WHAT ARE WE TO DO?

WE MUST RUN, MY LOVE, UNTIL OUR HEARTS BREAK!

BETTER TO DIE IN FLIGHT THAN TO BE CAPTURED NOW!



STAY,
BIG-
THINGS!

WE
HELP
YOU!

EGASPS!
EVIL
SPIRITS!



EVIL...? NO,
MALAK, I DO NOT
THINK SO!

STAY!

WE
CHASE
BAD BIG-
THINGS
AWAY!



PETALWING GIVES A KEENING WAR CRY, AND
SUDDENLY THE AIR IS FILLED WITH MANY MORE
OF THE TINY, MULTI-COLORED WONDERS!

ARMED WITH STINGING THORNS
THE PRESERVERS FLY
GLEEFULLY INTO BATTLE --



-- AS CLARE'S PARTY PLUNGES
HEEPELESSLY THROUGH LABOR-
IOUSLY WROUGHT STREAMERS
OF DELICATE WEBBINGS!

YACHN MY EYES!
SCOUGH'S MY MOUTH!

THESE WERE ARE
DEMON'S WORK!



CURSE THE
LEGENDS!

TEAR
THEM
DOWN!!



THE YOUNG ONES
MUST NOT ESCAPE...



AARGH!!



INSTANTLY,
MINUTIVE
WINGED BEINGS
SWARM AROUND THE
TERRIFIED HUMANS!

AAGRFF!!

MY
EYES!!

THE
DEMONS
HAVE
BLINDED
ME!!

CLUMSY
SPEARS PROVE
USELESS AGAINST
POSS SO SMALL
AND SO
SWIFT!

AT LAST EVEN OLBAR
THE MOUNTAINOUS
LEARNIS THAT THE OLD
LEGENDS POSSESS MORE
THAN A GRAIN OF TRUTH!

N-NO!
GO
AWAY!!

THE BATTLE
IS BRIEF AND
UNEVEN, FOR
THE HUMANS'
OWN FEARS
WORK AGAINST
THEM!

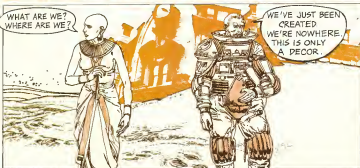
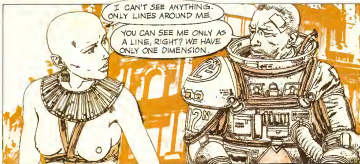
TAKE MALAK
AND SELAH—
AND BE DONE!!

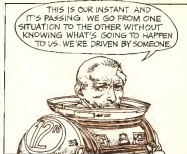
NOISYBAP
BIGTHINGS
COME BACK,
NO MORE!

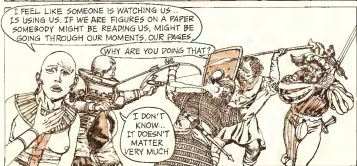
LET US LIVE, O
ANGRY SPIRITS!!



AWARE







YOU'RE FIGHTING! YOU'RE KILLING EACH OTHER!
TRY NOT TO MOVE!

I CAN'T! I CAN'T!
TRY TO HELP ME!



WHAT'S THE MATTER NOW?

I DON'T KNOW...
HOLD ON...



I DON'T FEEL MYSELF MOVING
ANYMORE.

YES. EVERYTHING
IS ENDING



WE DID SOMETHING... FOR SOMEONE.
WE'RE GOING TO STAY ALIVE AS LONG
AS HE KEEPS ON WATCHING US.



I FEEL LIKE THIS IS THE END.

CAN YOU SEE
SOMETHING?



NO, I DON'T SEE ANYTHING
UP FRONT... DON'T BE AFRAID...
MAYBE WE'LL BE BACK...
WHAT'S YOUR NAME?



I DON'T KNOW
THEY DIDN'T TELL ME.



***For the next
60 seconds***

by Bob Larkin

Don't touch me,
Ralph.
I'm sterile

The Honeymooners
will be back after
these announcements.



For the next sixty seconds, this station will conduct...

a test of the Emergency Broadcast System. This is only a test.

```

FFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFF

```



EEEEEEEEE



FF




FF



FF





This has been a test of the Emergency Broadcast System. Had it been an actual alert, you would have been instructed where to tune in your area for news and official information. This was only a test.

METAMORPHOSIS ODYSSEY

AKNATON

CHAPTER I

A ARTIFICIAL ORBIT
IS ABANDONED DURING
A FEELING OF
DARK SOLAR RADIATION
BECOMES ANOTHER
SPACE WALK
ANAKTON MAKES
HIS DESTINATION

STEEP RISE IN THE
DISTANCE QUICKER
THAN REMEMBER
SALVAGE RICHES
HELP BRINGS THE
POWER OF A PAST
LOST BUT NEVER
TO BE FORGOTTEN



THE UNDER WITNESS BRINGS HIM FURTHER AND BRINGS HIM TO HIS
SURROUNDINGS. HIS VISIONS ARE PHANTOMS. HE SEES ONLY DEATH.

HE REMEMBERS GEDROS AS A PLACE OF MAGNIFICENT MARVEL, ANCIENT DEEP-SEA, MYSTICAL BEAUTY, AND MYSTICAL SPIRIT. AND YET, REMEMBERING HIS REMAINS ARE SLOWLY DIVING AWAY THIS IS TO BE FORGIVEN, FOR GEDROS WAS HIS HOME.

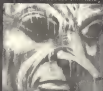
HIS HEART FALLS WITH THE SMOOTHS OF REMAINS, NOW DEAD, AND OF THE THINGS THAT MADE THEM FRIENDS.

HIS EYES CLOUT AT THE ABANDONED SOURCE OF LOVE AND HIS SOUL RISES, AND RISE THEN A PEARL HER NAME WAS MIRTH.

THESE HOURS OF THE PAST, WHILE THEY LINGER, GENTLY SOOTHING HIS TROUBLED SOUL. THEY ARE PAST-EVER GONE, BUT IT HELPS THAT THEY DWELL HERE.

THEY ARE HIM IN DEALING WITH THE ACID SHARPNESS OF HIS REALITY. THEY BRING THE ABANDONED MAN OF NO LOSS AND CONTRAST, THE ABANDONED WINDY TOWERS WITH HIM.

THE REALITY HOURS AND THE RAINBOW BECOMES DARKNESS, GEDROS REMAINS WITH A DENSE SHOCK AND ONLY THE THREE EYELESS REMAIN.



FROM WHERE THEY CAME
AN ENORMOUS BOMB SET THEM BLASTING
FROM THE SACRED CENTER OF THE
PLANET. STONKS CLAIM THEY
ARE CREATIONS OF THE EARLIEST
STAGE OF OUR OWN RACE... WHILE
MANY HAVE JOCE SURELY THEY CAN
ONLY BE PERIODS FROM NOW.

THE DIGNIFIED LITTLE
BATTLES, FOR IN
THE RITE'S MINDS
UPON NOW, TO MEET
THE FIVEFOODS AS
TO BRILLIANTLY
DEATH.

THESE UNFOLDINGLY ENOUGH TO SURVIVE ONESELF LEARN A
NEW PRINCIPLE.

THE LIVING FIND THEMSELVES HEADED
INTO SPECIAL CONFINEMENT CENTERS
BY THE FIVEFOODS' BATTLESHIP REMAINS.

THESE, LIFE
DISAPPEARS FROM
THEIR EYES...

...BUT THEIR BODIES LIVE ON TO FORM AN UNQUESTIONING
ARMY OF SLAVES.

THE HUMBLER PLANET ITSELF BECOMES THE FIVEFOODS'
NEXT VICTIM.

WITH INFINITE
PATIENCE, THE
FIVEFOODS
STAY AWAY
EVERY THING
- LIFE, PASSION
OR BEAUTY OF
THE MUNDANE
WORLD.

WITHIN TWO OR
THREE HUNDRED
MILES THEIR
KARDS ARE
COMPLETE AND
THEY MOVE ON.

BECAUSE ALL EGYPTIAN SUBJECTS ALWAYS WERE TO BE Loyal AND HARD WORKING, THEY ARE REWARDED WITH THEIR FREEDOM WHEN THEIR LIVES CLIMAX ENDS.



ON ORBIDS THIS DARK TRAILER WAS REWIND REEL ON REEL SEVERAL HUNDREDS OF TIMES.

BUT FOR SOME REASON THE ORBID WAS NEVER REALLY APPRECIATED.



THE PRIDE AND POWERFUL ORBIDREARMS WATCHED IN HORROR AS ONE HUNDRED AFTER ANOTHER FELL AHEAD THE TERRIBLE EGYPTIAN AND MACHINE.



HUNDREDS OF TIMES THEY WATCHED AND HOPED BUT NEVER DID THEY ACT.



FOR WAR WAS A STRIFE THEY HAD SOMETIME NEVER BEEN PLAGUED WITH, EVEN THOUGH POWER HAD ALWAYS BEEN ONE OF THEIR GODS.

THIS MAY HAVE BEEN BECAUSE OF THE FACT THAT CONQUERORS WERE BUT HOURS TO THEM, THE ORBIDREARMS STILL FEARED DEATH.

YET STILL THEY KNEW THAT SOMEDAY THE EGYPTIANS WOULD COME TO CLAIM THE BOUNTY OF ORBIDS.

SO THEY WATCHED AND THEY LEARNED OF DEATH AND KILLING, AND REPEATED



THE FLY CAME AND THEY WENT OUT IN GREAT DEATH BIRDS TO GREET THE EGYPTIANS.



FOR THE FIRST TIME IN OVER 500 YEARS, HUNDREDS OF
THOUSANDS PERISHED BUT THE
OF SHOOTING WARS.

LONG YEARS OF CHIEF-
FULLY OBSERVING
ANALYST OBSERVATIONS
HAD TOLD THE DIS-
COVERERS HOW TO BE
PERFECTLY CORRECT
ALREADY THEMSELVES.

BUT THEY DID NOT
ALLOW VICTORY TO
BLIND THEM TO
REALITY.

THE GLIMMER OF OWNERS
REALIZED THAT THEIR SET-
TING THE PROTECTIONS TO
ROUT WAS A FLUNK. THEIR
VICTORY WAS THE RESULT OF
CONTINUES OF UNCHALLENGED
EASTERN SUPREMACY.

ALL KNEW THE
ENEMY WOULD
RETURN SOMEDAY
PREPARED TO
DEAL HARDLY
WITH ANY RESIS-
TANCE THEY MIGHT
ENCOUNTER ON
THEIR DAY.

A HUNDRED NEW STRATEGIES WERE CONSIDERED AND AGREED TO BE LACKING. A THOUSAND NEW MEN-AT-ARMS WERE TESTED AND RULED TO BE UNSOUND.

AT LAST DEATH BECAME AN ACCEPTED PART OF THEIR FUTURE AND A MAJOR FACTOR IN THEIR PLANS.

THE DEATHS WERE POSTPONED TO THE BUT AGREED TO BE AHEAD.



Every man on the planet had power in their hands and they would use it to take.

Infinity men! They were called. In the night, the people knew the men would move the world of the universe and the world of the universe.

Still, the men would move the world of the universe. In the night, the people knew the men would move the world of the universe and the world of the universe. The men would move the world of the universe and the world of the universe.

With the power of the planet and the power of the planet, the destruction of the planet was the power of the planet and the power of the planet.

AGREED WITH THE POWER OF THE PLANET AND THE POWER OF THE PLANET.



AGREED WITH THE POWER OF THE PLANET AND THE POWER OF THE PLANET. THE POWER OF THE PLANET AND THE POWER OF THE PLANET.

THE POWER OF THE PLANET AND THE POWER OF THE PLANET. THE POWER OF THE PLANET AND THE POWER OF THE PLANET.



THE END NEARLY TAKES ITS DEAD WEIGHT TO OCCURE.

ITS COMING MEANT
MANY ANOTHER
WILLS FOR MOUNTAIN.



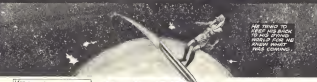
... SOME MORE HURRY-
BENDING THAN OTHERS



BUT AT LAST HE
KIDNAPED LOVED
HIS MOTHERS
AND THEN LEAVE
OF HIS DOOMED
HOME.



HIS TRIED TO
KEEP HIS BACK
TO HIS STONY
WORLD FOR HE
KNEW HURRY
WAS COMING.



YET AT THE LAST MOMENT
HE TURNED AND WITNESSED
THE MONSTROUS FORCES
OF ZYGOOTE TEAR HIS
PLANET APART.



THE HURRY ONCE AGAIN
BOUNT ITSELF DEEP IN-
TO HIS SOUL...



... AND HE DISAPPEARED
INTO THE NIGHT WITH
TERRIFIC IMPRESS OF
REVENGE ON HIS LIFE.



LULLABYE of BEDLAM

RAY HILL

CAN YOU HEAR
US, EXACT?

EXACT, THERE IS
NOTHING TO FEAR...

WE ONLY WANT TO
HELP YOU, EXACT!

TELL YOURSELF THAT IT'S
ONLY A DREAM!

IT'S NO USE -- SHE CAN'T HEAR US! I'M AFRAID HER CONDITION IS CRITICAL!

IT STILL AWAITS US, JOE. ASKING TO THINK WE'RE ACTUALLY BEING HER DREAMS!

MERELY VIDEO INTERPRETATIONS OF THE BRAIN'S ELECTRICAL IMPULSES... A BLEND OF NUCLEAR PHYSICS AND PSYCHOLOGY

AND NOW WE'RE READY FOR THE NEXT STEP: DIRECT CONTACT WITH THE UNCONSCIOUS.

BEFORE WE ESTABLISH THE LINK, STUDY THESE CAREFULLY!

-- THESE ARE LIVING PICTURES FOR YOU, AS REAL AS YOU AND I!

THIS IS PARANOID. HER REALTY SELF!

AH, WHAT DO YOU MAKE OF THIS ONE?

THE SICKNESS THAT IS DRIVING HER TO MADNESS AND DEATH!

THE "HUGE POOL" -- SHE CALLS HIM "DREAMAGE". HE APPEARS TO REPRESENT HER WILL TO LIVE -- WEAK THOUGH IT MAY BE

WITHOUT HIM, SHE WOULD SURELY DIE!

LATER...

IF EMILY IS TO BE CURED, YOU MUST COME HER TO DREAM THE MYTH OVERBOARD!

I ONLY HOPE I CAN REACH HER IN TIME!

ONCE YOU'VE GONE UNDER, WE'LL MAKE THE HOOK-UP... YOUR CONSCIOUSNESS WILL THEN BE DRAWN INTO HER! GOOD LUCK, DAVID!



NURSE... DAVE... DR. WALKER... THE
INJECTION... TEN... NINE... EIGHT...
SEVEN...



SIX... FIVE...
FOUR...



...THREE... TWO...
ONE!



GET UP, DR. GET UP! NO
TIME TO SLEEP!



WHAT...? ~~GOOD~~
I... ~~WANTED~~



AWAY, DR.
COME AWAY! MASTERS WILL
BE SWOONIN' SOON!

LISTEN THERE'S NOTHING
TO FEAR-- I'M HERE
TO HELP!



YES, WE
KNOW! NOW
FLEE! THEY
SWOON!

NO, FACE THEM!
THEY ONLY LIVE IN
YOUR OWN MIND!
THEY'RE ILLUSIONS,
GODDAMN! THEY--



REMEMBER... LIVING PSYCHIC
FORCES! REAL AS YOU AND
I... REMEMBER!



QUICKLY, BE! THIS
WAY! OVER THE
BRIDGE!

RUN!

THE BRIDGE
CRACKS AND
SPLAYS...

AS THE ANCIENT
ROPE STRAIN...
AND BREAK!

AFTER A LONG AND ARDUOUS
CLIMB, WALTER AND CROWDER
FINALLY REACH THE SUMMIT,
WHERE THEY ARE MET...

FOLLOW ME,
GENTLEMEN! FALSTINE
IS WAITING!

...BY A VERY
STRANGE ENIGMATIC!





DAVID!
YOU'VE
COME AT
LAST!

COME TO ME! COME TO
RALPHIE! I HAVE WAITED SO
VERY LONG!

GLAZING UPWARD, RALPHIE? IS LORRAINE OF
THE HOT SPOTS ABOUT 10M? HE SEES
ONLY HER EYES, DRAWING HIM CLOSER...

YOU KNOW THAT YOU WANT
ME. WHY DO YOU
HESITATE?

THROUGH THE GLASSING
WALKER IS TRANS-
FORMED TO MAGNETIC
ENCHANTED DOMAINS!

(GUSH!) OH,
DR. ASLER!
ISN'T IT
ROMANTIC?

I, I CAME HERE... TO
HELP SOMEONE. A GIRL...

FORGET HER! FORGET
EVERYTHING BUT ME!

WALKER HAS FALLEN
INTO A TRAP! THE LOVE
HE FEELS IS FOR
HIMSELF.

HIMSELF?

HE KNOWS THE FEMALE
WITHIN HIM-- SHE'LL TRY
TO KEEP HIM FOREVER!

CAN'T WE
BRING HIM
OUT OF IT?

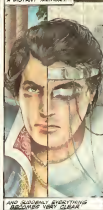
NO! THE SHOCK
WOULD KILL
HIM! WE CAN
ONLY HOPE!

BUT WALKER GIVES IN
WILLINGLY AS THE TERRORS FAULTING,
WRINGS HER NECK OF ENCHANTMENT!

DAVID THEN WROTE WHAT AS DAVID SINKS INTO THE SILENCE OF PAULINE'S DREAM...



SOMETHING IN HER REPLY SPARKS A DISTANT MEMORY



I'LL NEVER LET YOU GO--NEVER!



IN A FLASH HE QUICK TO REACT GRABBING A GLASS OF WATER, HE DASHES IT IN WALKER'S FACE!



WITHOUT WARNING, HUGE WAVES CRASH IN TO QUENCH THE FLAMES!





THE WAVES CARRY WALKER FAR AWAY FROM THE LIND OF HIS DREAMS, INTO THE DEPTHS OF A MAD
WILDERNESS.



ENTERING THE DEMON'S LAIR, DR. WALKER SAWED A FAMILIAR FORM, CROUCHED IN A CORNER ..



OH MY GOD.



IF WALKER / YOU'VE
COME
BACK / YOU'VE
FINALLY COME BACK.



WHAT IS THIS? WHO
DARES TO DEFEY THE
WILL OF THANATOS??



FOOLISH
MORTAL! THERE
IS MORE TO MY
POWER THAN
YOUR PUNY
KID CAN
EVER COMPARE-
HERO!



ONLY!



THERE CAN BE
NO ESCAPE
FROM THANATOS
REX!

"BEHOLD THAT WHICH IS GREATER THAN YOURSELF! BEHOLD EVIL IN ALL OF ITS MANY FORMS!" DAVID AND EMILY FLEE IN TERROR AS THAKKAFOS ASSUMES AN EVEN MORE HORRIBLE SHAPE!



EMILY, LISTEN! THIS IS NOTHING BUT A DREAM—AND YOU CAN END IT IF YOU TRY!



YOU CAN WAKE UP AND LIVE, OR DIE IN THIS HELL! THE CHOICE IS YOURS!



I... I WANT TO LIVE... I WANT TO LIVE!



EMILY'S SUDDEN SHOW OF STRENGTH REACHES THE PRIDE CRACKER, TRANSFORMING HIM...





...AND AN ANGEL WIELDING THE SWORD OF TRUTH.



AND SO, RED DEMONS LAD TO REST, MISS WALKER
DANCES.

IT IS DONE, COME,
WE'LL LET US SHARE OFF
THIS SLEEP OF DREAMS.



IT'S OVER, DR.
ADLER -- I'M READY
TO GO HOME!

DR. ADLER?
DR. ADLER?



YOU'RE GOING TO BE
FIVE NOW, MISS WALKER--
THANKS TO
YOUR BROTHER DAVID...

DR. ADLER, COME
QUICKLY DR. WALKER
HAS HAD A HEART
ATTACK!

HE'S
DEAD!



SOMEWHERE
WITHIN A DREAM,
A LOST SOUL
SCREAMS, AGAIN
AND AGAIN.



Once upon a time, a fantasy or adventure novel was more than just a good read. It was a total visual experience featuring the best in typography, design, and illuminated chapter headings, plus an abundance of color and black and white illustrations by the likes of N.C. Wyeth and Howard Pyle. Sadly, with the paper shortages of World War II, this type of book had all but disappeared. Recently, however, the illustrated fantasy novel has made a resurgence, particularly among large format, lavishly produced paperbacks. Next month, Ariel Books, one of the forerunners in this resurgence, is releasing an ambitious new addition to the field, part one of a projected trilogy, illuminated with nine full-color paintings and over sixty black and white illustrations. We're happy to be bringing you a special preview excerpt. What made us happy can be found on this and following pages.

ELFSPIRE

by John Pocsik & Illustrated by Thomas Blackshear



Clustering into the castle courtyard, the wizard Lusq and a fearful Sheriff Squat reined in their exhausted steeds near the towering statue of a stone dragon.

Squat jumped at the sight. His heart was pounding madly at these sinister surroundings,

but even more in fear of those he knew were following close behind. He clutched his sword tightly as he peered into the shadows, clustering under the gloomy arches, while the wizard climbed down from his saddle with the Book of Life. That blue shimmer still envel-

oped the wizard like a fine mist. Squat felt its menace and stayed well away. There would be no approaching Lusq from behind with a dagger now, and the mid elf could see that the wizard was steadily regaining his powers, growing younger and less hunched as each mo-

ment passed. He was feeding off the magic stored within these dark walls.

All of my plans are falling apart, the sheriff thought, looking around desperately if he could only flee with perhaps just a little treasure—but the thought of encountering a vengeful Prince of Thieves in the muzzling darkness made that impossible. And to whom, in all this wild land of rock, fire, and wind could he flee?

Squat glanced toward the gate leading back down the Road, still no sign of their pursuer. Oh that Lord Fain had somehow managed to kill the Prince of Thieves, he fervently prayed.

The wizard stalked across the courtyard, his sagged robes sweeping the dead leaves upon the flagstones. The wind stirred his white hair, blowing it back so that the black band now sunk so deep into his neck was exposed. But Lusz no longer felt the pain there—or in his mutilated hand, imbedded as he was with the toe of his reacquainted magic. Constant thunder rumbled in the distance, he saw the turrets of his castle starkly outlined against the flares of lightning. The wizard glanced at the mad elf stumbling along behind him; his eyes flamed with anger and contempt. "Lord Fain is dead!" he snarled. "I felt his hand shatter. He has found the release he so desired—and the fool has at least bought me time. Now the Light itself is reborn on Glasdhane's side. That I did not expect. Yet I can still prevail if I can summon the Daemnon Lords from Marthane."

Ignoring the fat sheriff, the wizard hurried up the stone steps toward the studded metal door.

The wizard raised his good hand and made the Sign of the Crescent. "By the hidden name of your master, open door, to me!"

The door swung inward with barely a metallic whisper. Lusz turned toward the Dragon in the courtyard.

Guardian of the Gate,
Long frozen in stone—
Feel the life flow.

Release, flesh and bone.

A deafening roar split the gloom. Squat heard a loud his-

sing, as if a million swords being drawn at the same time, he whirled and craned out in terror, for the giant statue was moving. It was coming to life! The sheriff cringed back from its baleful, crimson eyes, still not believing what he was seeing. Lusz had coaxed up a living dragon from dead stone! Puffs of black smoke drifted from its plastered nostrils. The dim glow of sunset peeping through rifts in the storm clouds, struck rainbow glints and sheens off the beast's jewel-like scales. Its great wings beat ever faster as it hopped forward, struggling for balance, never taking its fiery eyes off the wizard. The gargantuan jaws swung open to expose dripping fangs, far down in its smoky maw, the sheriff thought, he saw flames flickering.

The wizard pointed out, "Enemies, come, my faithful pet. See to it now they are fully met."

More black smoke belched forth as the dragon's head bobbed up and down. Its wings began to beat faster and faster, sawing clouds of dust. Suddenly it took off, ascending sharply, soaring gracefully up. It sailed over the wall in the blink of an eye and was lost in the hurrying clouds overhead.

Without waiting, Lusz rushed into the darkness of his castle. The fat elf followed, backing fearfully through the entrance. The door narrowly missed him as it swung shut with a brazen clang.

"Light!" shouted the wizard in a ringing voice. Instantly the torches lining the corridor flared into brightness. The air was close and warm and smelled of oiled, heated metal. Staring at those black walls, Squat could detect neither bolt nor seam nor seal. Lusz swept on down the corridor, throwing off his ragged cloak and dusty armor with a crash. His tread was swift—indeed, he was almost running with his precious burden.

The two elves entered an immense, high-domed hall, in the center of which was a circular table of black gleaming wood, all of one piece, upon it there was a setting of gold plate, crystal chalice, and softly glowing tapers, as if the wizard

had been expected for a meal.

Lusz turned. The fierce expression upon his sinister face made Squat fall back. "Wait here!" his voice echoed and whispered through the dusky chamber. "My dragon will deal with those who would dare enter uninvited. But should they be so fortunate as to win past that beast, they will find that Castle Lusz is filled with many tricks and traps and deadly rooms for the unwanted prowler. And if they should win past them," he said softly, his eyes boring into the mid-elf's, "then I know that you, good sheriff Squat, will stay them for me—if you value your life!"

Lusz turned to leave, but the sheriff suddenly grabbed at his robe and spun the tall elf around.

"You're not leaving me here to face the Prince of Thieves alone, wizard!" he spat. "I'm not going to fight your battles while you're busy making off with your magical hoard! The Book you're holding is worth a city's ransom. I think I had best stay with you, mage, Lord Fain left your side, which proved most unfortunate for him. I am Squat and I am not so easily to—"

There was a sharp crack, a flash of blinding light. Squat was hurled across the chamber to crash against the wall, down which he slid, pieces of his dented armor falling around him.

"How dare you lay a hand on the wizard Lusz! You have no place at all within these walls, sheriff! It is only at my sufferance that you continue to breathe. You followed me here, thinking I would lead you to treasure—that great shamefaced goal of your entire greedy race, which blinds all elves." He held up the Book of Life. "This is my treasure, the key which will give me the ultimate powers, the key which will make me master over Eiland and Faine and Giantland and all the realms between. Do not touch me again, elf—or leave this hall—or I will not be so merciful! My traps can kill a sheriff as well as a thief!"

With that, the wizard vanished behind a subtle herring. Sheriff Squat gave a weak curse, but his eyes glowed like

coals of red fury in the darkness. He would waste no further time! He would find Lusz, shove a dagger between those bony shoulders and take the Book of Life—along with whatever other magic baubles he might chance upon (including that wondrous scrying crystal). Then he would steal away as quickly and as secretly as possible, away from this pole of sorcery and shadow.

As he stumbled toward the hanging, he glanced back down the corridor at the great arched entrance. He shivered, hoping it would be strong enough to keep the Prince or Thieves out. He wondered how close the thief was now, but it really did not matter. Not even Sathyrmer could fight a dragon like that single-handed and expect to wind up anything other than cinder.

Sheriff Squat leaped on into the darkness, searching for his fortune.

~~~~~  
Riding as though goblins were chasing at their heels, Glasdhane and Sathyrmer thundered across the bridge spanning the chasm known as Roaring Gorge.

A fine mist filled the air, silencing their hair, their flowing cloaks and their armor. Upstream, a column of foaming water yetted from an opening in the gray cliffs, falling hundreds of feet to smash against the polished rocks below.

Then the two elves were safely across and rising up into the crags along the twisting road. The sky turned black and angry clouds came raging out of the heights toward them. The peaks now had Castle Lusz upon their nose. Glasdhane turned his head to shout against the wind. "We must hurry! Lusz is in his castle by now, but he will still need time to prepare the Mirror of Levels, by which he means to call the Daemnon Lords. I can feel my strength and magic powers rising, thanks to Tolaith and the Brotherhood of the Light. They are very close. I am ready for my duel with the wizard!"

Sathyrmer spurred his mount until he was rocking neck and neck with the elf lord.

He wished that he had his Cloak of Color with him now—



now, when he really needed it, but he had thrown off all his packs when they set out in pursuit of the two elves.

The high elf glanced at the thief sharply. His eyes blazed "Sairlymyer! I know what you are thinking, but first and at any cost we must prevent Luag from giving the secret of release to the Demon Lords. They must not regain that knowledge. That means the wizard will probably have to die, alive, he will remain a menace to us all! If one of us fails, the other must find the wizard and slay him with the enchanted blade before Luag can complete his spell. He must not live to give them the Book of Life!"

"He will live long enough!" the thief shouted back.

"Sairlymyer! You are bound by oath! Swear to me, you will do exactly as I say, or you will not enter that castle with me. You will not jeopardize Eldland!"

"I swear!" the low elf yelled bitterly into the wind. "I swear Luag will not live to endanger the elves!"

They galloped up the last curving incline and through a gate. Then the castle was suddenly before them, as if it had leaped out of the growling darkness to bar their way. They rode slowly into a wide courtyard in front of the main pile of the wizard's abode.

They leaped down upon the flagstones.

The high elf opened his pouch and sprinkled the last remnants of the elvenhale over both of their blades. "This is all of it. Now we have to succeed."

A shal had shattered the silence. A shadow swept over the courtyard out of the clouds. They had to shield their eyes against a sudden flare of brilliant yellow light. Battering and bucking, their mounts belted, racing around the courtyard before finally plunging through the gate. Both elves heard a vibrant scream over their heads, and the drum of leathery wings.

"A dragon! Luag has set a dragon upon us!" Glasthane shouted as he leaped for the steps. A shaft of flame shot out of the sky, licking at their heels. Sairlymyer crouched behind the base of one of the

demon statues. His small heart pounded in wonder, for he had never seen a dragon before!

The dragon screamed in rage as it dove toward the intruders again, its wings outspread like vanes. Smoke belled from its nostrils. Its great claws were flexed to tear into its victims. Those terrible jaws opened wide and a column of yellow and orange fire lit up the gloom as it hurtled down toward the frightened elves. They ducked behind an iron statue, which began to glow cherry red. Waves of heat beat at them. The dragon swept up for another pass.

Glasthane sheathed his sword, mounted to the top of the stairs in front of the door, and closed his eyes in concentration.



Sweat began to pour down his gnat pale face. The dragon returned, settling lower and lower, beating and buffeting the elves with the blasts of its wings. Its head darted at the elf lord like an adder striking. Uttering a cry, Sairlymyer smote at the beast's neck, but his slender rapier only slid along the armored scales. The dragon's mouth opened—and the high elf disappeared in a sheet of flame!

"Glasthane!" Sairlymyer screamed. His heart stopped, for no elf could have survived that blast.

The dragon's wings creaked as it lifted higher, continuing to lick its glowing talons down upon its threshold. The flame licked toward the small

thief who jumped down the steps. Kneeling by the pedestal, nodding himself to face the final attack, Sairlymyer saw a shadow stir in the heart of the fire. His mouth fell open—

Lord Glasthane came striding forward! His garments were not even singed by the flames. But his slanted eyes were glowing with a bright intensity that matched the dragon's fire.

The flame cut off abruptly. The dragon screamed as it mounted into the upper air, bearing at the lightning and the clouds. Again golden fire poured down from the elf lord, enveloping him, again he walked forward unharmed.

Glasthane's lips began to move silently. The great crea-

ture grew larger and larger.

The stone dragon landed in the courtyard with a deafening crash. The air was filled with rock chips and grey fragments. The smell of ancient dust filled the air.

All that was left of Luag's guardian was a pile of rubble lying in the middle of the courtyard. Something glimmered within the mound's heart, dimmed and went out.

Glasthane came striding down the steps and helped the dazed elf to his feet. "That beast must have been more than a thousand years old, for there are not any like it alive in Eldland today. Luag must have captured the dragon long ago and kept it imprisoned in stone until such time as he would need use it against invaders. His sorcery is strong, but so is my magic, for it comes from the Light. Quickly now—let us enter, and be wary for traps!"

At the top of the steps, Glasthane unclasped the seamless portal with the hilt of his grey elven sword.

Castle of darkness,  
portal of night,  
Open before me in the  
name of the Light!

The mistal began to glow with heat. A sudden wind whirled up, as if the door were trying to suck air to remain cool. It turned from dull red to bright cherry to vivid orange.

Glasthane was trembling from the effort of maintaining his spell.

The door shuddered and suddenly collapsed inward in a rain of fiery shards and fragments.

They ran up the steps and leaped through the opening, avoiding the dripping metal.

"Are you all right?" asked the Prince of Thieves.

"Do not worry about me!" Glasthane gasped. "There is always a price to pay when such magic is used, but it is the only way to defeat Luag's enchantments. The Light is still with us! The Shaper grant we are not too late! Hurry! It is getting dark outside and the stars will soon be in place. Hurry!"

The two elves raced on into the shadowy corridors of this somber palace, that abode of evil, Castle Luag.

# THE FANTASIES OF MIRKO ILIĆ

He's a talented young Yugoslavian cartoonist. Over these next three pages and in future issues, you can experience his unique, darkly humored, one page fantasies. Graphic. Surreal. Disturbing. For unlike many fantasies, his are about reality.

## HISTORY OF HUMAN ABSURDITY

by Mirko Ilić • Part 1



OHAY  
HOLD UP A  
SECOND



THANK YOU



SEE  
THAT HOLE  
THE BULLET  
PUNCHED IT



MAKES A PERFECT  
LOOKOUT SPOT. IT'S  
A THOUSAND TO ONE  
AND ANOTHER  
ROUND WILL  
HIT THERE  
NICE TO  
KNOW...



WHEN ONLY  
YOUR HEAD IS  
UNPROTECTED



NOW, LET'S SEE  
WHAT THE ENEMY  
IS UP TO.



SEE P  
SOME TIME  
IT WOULD  
BE BETTER



GOT A THOUSAND TO  
ONE CHANCE OF A HIT  
WHEN THE HOLE BURNERS  
TOLD SOME OTHER THING  
IT'S A THOUSAND TO ONE  
NO BULLET'LL EVER  
HIT THERE AGAIN.

# THE VICTOR

*M. R. 16*



# SHAKTI



there was a distinctly beautiful  
and strong horse.



who  
obviously stood in one place.



he waited for a while  
a while, not a moment.  
So each seemed one another.



only the rider  
could show them the two paths.  
And only  
the horse could carry them there.  
there was a distinctly strong horse.



# CONVERT









NOW, MY SON, IS THY BEGINNING  
 DAWNLIGHT IS IN THESE INTERSE, INFINITE  
 AND HEY! THOU WILT NOT GO TO OLD AGE, DOMINATION  
 AND DEATH... BUT TO THE GREATER JOURNEY

A JOURNEY I  
 COVET -- THE GODS  
 FORGIVE ME -- FOR  
 I AM IMPATIENT  
 TO GET UPON IT  
 MYSELF



THOU WILT PURSUE UPON THY-  
 SELF, THY MIND FILLED WITH  
 LIGHT AND NAUGHT ELSE...



THE VERY WHOLE OF  
 THY BRAIN WILL COIL...



TIGHTEN TO LOSE THE  
 MATRIX THAT IS THEE THE  
 LOSS



A GAIN OF  
 TIME ETERNAL  
 THOU SHALT  
 SEE...



TWICE ITSELF  
 ITS PART AND  
 PARTICLE



ITS  
 LIGHT...



ITS  
 DARK...



THOU ART NOW WITH  
 KARU TWICE ITSELF  
 TIME.



THY WARRIOR IS  
 OF THE GODS,  
 GOOD PEOPLE





ACROSS THE VAST PLAIN, THE DISTANT  
FIGURE APPEARED LIKE A REF-- WITH  
TWO TINY SHARKS SWIMMING CLOSELY  
BEHIND.



FOOTSTEPS GREW LOUDER AND A FIGURE DREW CLOSER...  
IT WAS A "GROOM", DRAGGING SOMETHING BEHIND ON A ROPE.



# HEADS

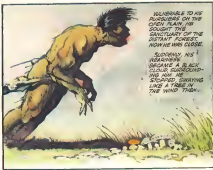
THE BATTLE HAD ENDED, ONLY  
THE STRONGEST HAD SURVIVED.  
HIS TROOP HAD BEEN DESTROYED  
AND ONLY HE HAD ESCAPED WITH  
THE TROOPERS.

FOR DAYS HE RAN ON AND ON...  
NEVER STOPPING TO EAT, TO DRINK,  
OR TO SLEEP. BUT NO LONGER  
COULD HIS POWERFUL BODY OBEY  
THE COMMAND TO FLEE.

THE HEADS WERE TOO HEAVY FOR  
HIM, AND HIS BROWNED ARMS  
COULD DRAG THEM NO FURTHER.  
ALTHOUGH STOPPING MEANT  
CERTAIN DEATH AT THE MERCILESS  
HANDS OF THE ENEMY TROOP, HE  
HEARD THE SONG OF BLOOD. THE  
HEADS WOULD SING TO HIS FELLOW  
WARRIORS. AND FOR A MOMENT  
HIS STRENGTH SURGED AND HE  
ROARED: ON.



BUT HIS WEAKNESS OVERPOWERED HIM AND, RELUCTANTLY, HE HED THE BEARDS IN A CLUMP OF GRASS, VOWING TO RETURN FOR THEM.



UNWILLING TO HE POSSIBLY ON THE OPEN PLAIN, HE SOUGHT THE SANCTUARY OF THE DISTANT FOREST, NOWING WAS CLOSE.

Suddenly, his weakness became a black cloud, surrounding him. He dropped, swaying like a tree in the wind there.



HIS HARD BODY SANK INTO THE SOFT MOSS THAT CARPETED THE FOREST FLOOR, CAUSING THE MUSHROOMS AND TOADSTOOLS INTO A RILLY ROLL.

AN EERIE SILENCE FOLLOWED AS WHEN BEARS IN THE WOODS NO CREATURE STIRRED.



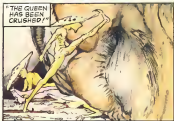
UNTIL...



FROM UNDER COLOMBUS' POWER, TINY ARMS AND LEGS MOVED. TINY EYES PEERED WONDERSMUCK AT THE GIANT FALLEN FROM THE SKY. UNDER THE BOOM, HUNDREDS OF OTHER TINY ARMS AND LEGS OF THOSE LESS FORTUNATE PROCEEDED, CENTIPEDE-LIKE THE AIR WAS FILLED WITH THE PUNGBEST ACIDMA OF THE DROGERS FROM THEIR CRUSHED LITTLE BODIES.



"THE QUEEN," CRIED THE PRIME.



"THE QUEEN HAS BEEN CRUSHED!"



MUSTERING THEIR FORCE, THE DROGERS RAISED THE BOOM AND CARRIED HIM OFF.

AT LAST THEY REACHED THE OLD WILLOW-TREE AT THE FOREST'S EDGE ON THE TREES' PALE SOIL, MOON FROM DAY. LIGHTER PENETRATING RAYS, NARROW AN OPENING LACED WITH GREENNESS, LEADING TO AN UNDERGROUND PASSAGE.



NEARBY...

DO DA DOO ON ROCKY RACCOON TEAM...

HUN E WHAT'S  
DIS?

LOOKY HERE!  
DIS TRACKS END IN  
DIS PATCH O' SQUISHED  
MUSHROOMS... WHAT  
WE GONNA DO NOW?

OH! ROCKY-  
BUTT JOON IS  
AROUND HERE  
SOMEWHERE... I  
CAN SMELL 'EM!  
WE'RE NOT  
TURNIN' BACK  
TILL HIS HEAD'S  
RUSHIN' ON MY  
POLE.

YEAH, BUT NOBODY  
FROM OUR TRIBE'S  
COME DIS FAR BEFORE. I DON'T  
LIKE DIS PLACE... IT GIVES  
ME DA CREEPS.



MEANTIME, THE SHREDS  
LEARNED OF THE GUNNIE'S  
DEATH FROM HER BROTHER,  
GUNNIE.





HE STUNNED SILENCE QUICKLY TRANSFORMED THEM INTO A BLINDING RAGE, AND HE ORDERED THEM STANDING UP OVER A LOW PLANE BY THEIR PRINCE PARTS.



"MURCH!" PLAINED THE WORKER "WE HAVE SLAIN THE ACCURSED SURFACE DEMON NOW WE HAVE A PLAN. HIS BODY IS VERY FERTILE IF WE PLANT SPORES ON HIM WE CAN GROW THOUSANDS OF NEW MUSHROOMS. SURELY, THERE WOULD BE AT LEAST ONE QUEEN."



AFTER CAREFUL CONSIDERATION, THE EMPEROR AGREED. BUT ONLY IF, BY THE FOLLOWING DAY, THEY BROUGHT HIM A NEW QUEEN.



THAT NIGHT THE WORKERS GATHERED FOR THE DIFFICULT TASK. EACH WITH A BUCKET-FULL OF FERTILE SPORES... THEY PLANTED THEM EVERYWHERE...



BETWEEN HIS TOES..

HOURS LATER, THEY BEGAN TO WATCH AND BROWSE THE HUGEST ASSORTMENT OF PAINTED TOES! PEOPLE BECAME DISPLAYING THEIR BEAUTIFUL ARRAY OF COLORS TO THE NIGHT

IT WAS THE MOST BEAUTIFUL THING THE KING  
H'D SEEN FOR HUNDREDS. HE SAT MOTIONLESS,  
GLAZING HIS NEW WHITE BEARD AT THE  
TWO'S BIRTH JOURNALS THROUGH THE KING-  
DOM FROM ALL DIRECTIONS. THEY CAME TO  
HER...

1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026, 2027, 2028, 2029, 2030, 2031, 2032, 2033, 2034, 2035, 2036, 2037, 2038, 2039, 2040, 2041, 2042, 2043, 2044, 2045, 2046, 2047, 2048, 2049, 2050, 2051, 2052, 2053, 2054, 2055, 2056, 2057, 2058, 2059, 2060, 2061, 2062, 2063, 2064, 2065, 2066, 2067, 2068, 2069, 2070, 2071, 2072, 2073, 2074, 2075, 2076, 2077, 2078, 2079, 2080, 2081, 2082, 2083, 2084, 2085, 2086, 2087, 2088, 2089, 2090, 2091, 2092, 2093, 2094, 2095, 2096, 2097, 2098, 2099, 2100, 2101, 2102, 2103, 2104, 2105, 2106, 2107, 2108, 2109, 2110, 2111, 2112, 2113, 2114, 2115, 2116, 2117, 2118, 2119, 2120, 2121, 2122, 2123, 2124, 2125, 2126, 2127, 2128, 2129, 2130, 2131, 2132, 2133, 2134, 2135, 2136, 2137, 2138, 2139, 2140, 2141, 2142, 2143, 2144, 2145, 2146, 2147, 2148, 2149, 2150, 2151, 2152, 2153, 2154, 2155, 2156, 2157, 2158, 2159, 2160, 2161, 2162, 2163, 2164, 2165, 2166, 2167, 2168, 2169, 2170, 2171, 2172, 2173, 2174, 2175, 2176, 2177, 2178, 2179, 2180, 2181, 2182, 2183, 2184, 2185, 2186, 2187, 2188, 2189, 2190, 2191, 2192, 2193, 2194, 2195, 2196, 2197, 2198, 2199, 2200, 2201, 2202, 2203, 2204, 2205, 2206, 2207, 2208, 2209, 2210, 2211, 2212, 2213, 2214, 2215, 2216, 2217, 2218, 2219, 2220, 2221, 2222, 2223, 2224, 2225, 2226, 2227, 2228, 2229, 2230, 2231, 2232, 2233, 2234, 2235, 2236, 2237, 2238, 2239, 2240, 2241, 2242, 2243, 2244, 2245, 2246, 2247, 2248, 2249, 2250, 2251, 2252, 2253, 2254, 2255, 2256, 2257, 2258, 2259, 2260, 2261, 2262, 2263, 2264, 2265, 2266, 2267, 2268, 2269, 2270, 2271, 2272, 2273, 2274, 2275, 2276, 2277, 2278, 2279, 2280, 2281, 2282, 2283, 2284, 2285, 2286, 2287, 2288, 2289, 2290, 2291, 2292, 2293, 2294, 2295, 2296, 2297, 2298, 2299, 2300, 2301, 2302, 2303, 2304, 2305, 2306, 2307, 2308, 2309, 2310, 2311, 2312, 2313, 2314, 2315, 2316, 2317, 2318, 2319, 2320, 2321, 2322, 2323, 2324, 2325, 2326, 2327, 2328, 2329, 2330, 2331, 2332, 2333, 2334, 2335, 2336, 2337, 2338, 2339, 2340, 2341, 2342, 2343, 2344, 2345, 2346, 2347, 2348, 2349, 2350, 2351, 2352, 2353, 2354, 2355, 2356, 2357, 2358, 2359, 2360, 2361, 2362, 2363, 2364, 2365, 2366, 2367, 2368, 2369, 2370, 2371, 2372, 2373, 2374, 2375, 2376, 2377, 2378, 2379, 2380, 2381, 2382, 2383, 2384, 2385, 2386, 2387, 2388, 2389, 2390, 2391, 2392, 2393, 2394, 2395, 2396, 2397, 2398, 2399, 2400, 2401, 2402, 2403, 2404, 2405, 2406, 2407, 2408, 2409, 2410, 2411, 2412, 2413, 2414, 2415, 2416, 2417, 2418, 2419, 2420, 2421, 2422, 2423, 2424, 2425, 2426, 2427, 2428, 2429, 2430, 2431, 2432, 2433, 2434, 2435, 2436, 2437, 2438, 2439, 2440, 2441, 2442, 2443, 2444, 2445, 2446, 2447, 2448, 2449, 2450, 2451, 2452, 2453, 2454, 2455, 2456, 2457, 2458, 2459, 2460, 2461, 2462, 2463, 2464, 2465, 2466, 2467, 2468, 2469, 2470, 2471, 2472, 2473, 2474, 2475, 2476, 2477, 2478, 2479, 2480, 2481, 2482, 2483, 2484, 2485, 2486, 2487, 2488, 2489, 2490, 2491, 2492, 2493, 2494, 2495, 2496, 2497, 2498, 2499, 2500, 2501, 2502, 2503, 2504, 2505, 2506, 2507, 2508, 2509, 2510, 2511, 2512, 2513, 2514, 2515, 2516, 2517, 2518, 2519, 2520, 2521, 2522, 2523, 2524, 2525, 2526, 2527, 2528, 2529, 2530, 2531, 2532, 2533, 2534, 2535, 2536, 2537, 2538, 2539, 2540, 2541, 2542, 2543, 2544, 2545, 2546, 2547, 2548, 2549, 2550, 2551, 2552, 2553, 2554, 2555, 2556, 2557, 2558, 2559, 2560, 2561, 2562, 2563, 2564, 2565, 2566, 2567, 2568, 2569, 2570, 2571, 2572, 2573, 2574, 2575, 2576, 2577, 2578, 2579, 2580, 2581, 2582, 2583, 2584, 2585, 2586, 2587, 2588, 2589, 2590, 2591, 2592, 2593, 2594, 2595, 2596, 2597, 2598, 2599, 2600, 2601, 2602, 2603, 2604, 2605, 2606, 2607, 2608, 2609, 2610, 2611, 2612, 2613, 2614, 2615, 2616, 2617, 2618, 2619, 2620, 2621, 2622, 2623, 2624, 2625, 2626, 2627, 2628, 2629, 2630, 2631, 2632, 2633, 2634, 2635, 2636, 2637, 2638, 2639, 2640, 2641, 2642, 2643, 2644, 2645, 2646, 2647, 2648, 2649, 2650, 2651, 2652, 2653, 2654, 2655, 2656, 2657, 2658, 2659, 2660, 2661, 2662, 2663, 2664, 2665, 2666, 2667, 2668, 2669, 2670, 2671, 2672, 2673, 2674, 2675, 2676, 2677, 2678, 2679, 26



SAY... DID  
YOU HEAR  
DIT?

NO I DIDN'T HEAR  
NUTTIN' OUT IT OUT...  
YOU'RE MAKIN' ME  
NERVOUS.



I TELL YA I HEARD SOMETHIN' OUT HERE I KNEW WE  
NEVER SHOULD'VE COME DIS  
FAR... ALL FOR ONE STINKIN'...

HE AWAKE...

H-HEAD! GROWIN'  
OUTTA DA GROUND!

YAAAAAAA!  
A CREEP!

WHAT  
THE...

ARRRRR-  
AGGGHH!

ANNNNNNNNN!



AEEEEEE!

YAWN!!



!!!



HEADS  
HEADS  
HEADS

e

# ZAI!

## CHAPTER II

YOU NEVER CHALLENGED SINCE NOW  
YOUR NAME. NOW DO YOU? IN  
FACT, LIP UNTIL A MOMENT AGO,  
YOU HAD NO IDEA WHAT A  
NAME WAS.

ISN'T IT FRIGHTENING HOW  
MANY CONCEPTS AND REALITIES  
THERE ARE THAT YOU HAVEN'T  
EVEN GUESSED AWAY OF  
BEFORE, THAT YOU NOW  
UNDERSTAND TOTALLY.



THE BIG BANG! THE FACT THAT YOU LIVE ON A PLANET CALLED EARTH, WHICH ORBITS THE STAR, ALPHA CENTAURI, YOU NEVER REALIZED WHAT A "POOR" AND "DESOLATE" PLACE IT WAS, WITH LITTLE WATER, NO MINERAL WEALTH, PLANT LIFE OR ANIMALS. GAVE YOU TYJORIANS, PERHAPS THAT'S WHY THE TYJORIANS HAVE OVERLOOKED YOUR WAYS. YOUR PEOPLE WOULD NOT EVEN MAKE GOOD SLAVES.



FOR EVEN THOUGH THE TYJORIAN RACE HAS EXISTED OVER THIRTY MILLION YEARS, IT HAS BARELY EVOLVED ABOVE *BE STUPIDITY*.



IT WAS A COLD, BIOLOGICAL JEST OF THE EVILS THAT SET YOU CANNIBALS TYJORIANS UPON A WORLD THIS EFFICIENT TO SUPPORT ANY FORM OF LIFE OTHER THAN YOUR OWN.

YOUR RACE'S ONLY CHOICE WAS CANNIBALISM OR EXTINCTION.

LUCKY YOUR SPECIES BREW AND BREW TO ADULTHOOD QUICKLY AND THAT YOUR ZOOGENESIS CONTAINED SOME STRANGE ANTIVIRAL ELEMENT THAT ENABLED YOUR PEOPLE TO MULTIPLY FASTER THAN THEY COULD DEVOUR EACH OTHER.

IT'S NOT SURPRISING THAT YOUR PEOPLE NEVER EVOLVED MUCH. SOMETHING LEFT LITTLE TIME FOR IMPROVEMENT.



THERE'S THE WAY IT'S ALWAYS BEEN ON TYJOR, THAT IS, UNTIL YOU WERE BORN.

A black and white photograph of a young child sitting on the ground, looking up at a large, dark, textured object, possibly a rock or a piece of wood, which is illuminated by a strong light source. The child is positioned in the lower left, looking towards the upper right. The object is large and craggy, with a bright light reflecting off its surface. The background is dark and indistinct.

FORGIVELY, YOU HAD THE WISDOM OF YOUTH  
AND THE INFANTILE HABIT OF BECOMING ANYTHING  
WITHIN REACH OF YOUR IMAGINATION.

TIME HAS PASSED STATIONED BY  
DISCOVERING THAT THE *SEASIDE*  
CONCEPTS WHICH WERE YOUR  
MUSE, WERE AND ARE - 200%



SOON AFTERWARDS, YOUR ACTORS HAD ENOUGH SENSE TO STOP WITHOUT STOPPING WITHIN HIS TO COLLECT THE POLICE. MURDER AND MURDERING YOU TO ADULTHOOD, APPROX. THE NAME OF CANNIBALISM. TRICKERY THAT CONSTANTLY STALLED THEM OVER.



YOU  
REALIZED  
EVEN WHEN  
THAT YOU  
WERE  
DIFFERENT



THEY WERE UPON YOU, BITING AND TEARING, BEFORE YOU WERE EVEN AWARE OF THEM.

THEY WERE UPON YOU, EATING  
AND TRADING. BEFORE YOU  
WERE EVEN AWARE OF THEM.

YOU REACTED  
WITHOUT THINKING.



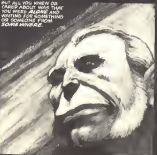
YOU SURVIVED.



YOU WERE SURPRISED AT HOW STRONG YOU WERE.  
EVEN THEN YOU DIDN'T REALIZE YOU WERE MORE  
POWERFUL THAN ANY FEAR THEODORIAN MAILED.

IT WAS YOUR DUTY OF GLORY  
ENTIRELY THAT MADE YOU DO

BUT ALL YOU KNEW OF  
CAME ABOUT WHEN THAT  
YOU WERE SHAKING AND  
FIGHTING FOR SOMETHING  
TO SOMEBODY FROM  
SOMEWHERE.



SO YOU HANDLED OFF  
AMAZINGLY KNOWING THAT  
WHAT LAY BEFORE WAS  
JUST AND GLORY, HELPING  
THAT WHAT WANTED GREAT  
WAS... WELL, NOT SO BAD





IT WASN'T THAT LONG  
BETTERWARD THAT  
YOU HAD AKA.



YOU KNOW INSTANTLY THAT THIS  
WAS MORE THAN THE JUMP  
AHEAD THAT WOULD HAVE YOU  
FORCIBLY TAKE HER THEN  
ABANDON HER-UNHAZARDED YET  
WITH CHILD SO THAT THE  
PEOPLE COULD GO ON. NO,  
THIS WAS DIFFERENT THOUGH  
YOU HAD NO ANSWER FOR IT,  
FOR YOU HAD NO WORDS.

YOU BEGAN BY SCRIBBLING APOD  
FOR HER, SHE FEARED YOU BUT  
ACCEPTED IT.



FEAR TURNED TO SOMETHING ELSE  
WHEN YOU DROVE OFF THOSE  
WHO WOULD HAVE MADE  
A MEAL OF HER.



THE SHORT TIME THAT  
FOLLOWED WAS GREATER  
BUTTER, YOUR BORN  
SERIAL MIND, IN ITS  
OWN WAY, PLAYED IT  
WELL AFTER END.

THEN ONE DAY WHILE YOU WERE  
HOLDING FOR HER, YOU BEGON-  
LY SERVED IT, YOU AVOID IT...  
YOU RACED BACK TO HER...







BUT IT WAS TOO LATE

ONCE AGAIN THE ZOMBIES RETURNED, NOW  
WORSE THAN EVER, FOR THE PAIR WAS NOW  
BONDED TO A 4003, SOUL DEEP



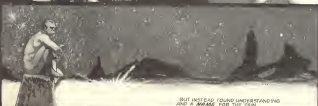
SOMETHING HAD CHANGED WITHIN  
FOR THE NATURE WAS NEVER  
WANT FOR A TYRANNUS TO FEEL



IT TOOK FROM WITHIN  
YOUR MIGHTY FRAME,  
IT ECHOED WITHIN  
YOUR HEART, THERE  
WAS NO WAY TO STOP  
THE PAIN FOR ITS  
GONE, HAD NO  
DEFINITION



SO YOU CLIMBED HIGH INTO  
THE CLOUDS, HANGING PEAKS  
PLANNING TO END THE  
PAIN IN ONE MAD  
PLUNGE...



BUT INSTEAD, FOUND UNDERSTANDING  
AND A *WARRIOR* FOR THE PAIR



I AM  
LOD ARKATON  
OF DESIRE.  
I AM THE ONE  
RESPONSIBLE FOR  
YOUR TOWMENT. I  
HAD NO CHOICE.

I AM  
SORRY.

HOW IS  
IT THAT I  
UNDERSTAND  
YOUR WORDS  
MEN OOB?

HOW IS  
IT THAT I  
UNDERSTAND  
SO MUCH?



WINE IS THE POWER TO  
BESTOW KNOWLEDGE  
AND THE ABILITY TO  
FORCE IT.



THE WARS  
HAVE NEED OF  
A MONSTER  
WITH A MIND  
AND A SOUL.

THAT IS  
WHY YOU  
ARE.



THERE IS  
A DARKNESS  
THAT SPREADS  
ACROSS THE GRASS  
OF THE NIGHT.  
IT CANNOT  
BE STOPPED.

IT MUST BE  
DESTROYED.



# Juliet

THIS IS AN ADVANCED COURSE  
FOR STUDENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF

TO: HON. BOB BAKER  
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
204 W. TRUMP STREET  
S.W. PORTLAND, OREGON 97201  
FROM: JAMES H. HARTZ  
1001 10TH AVE. S.W.  
SEASIDE, OREGON 97138

ALAN RYAN  
 CHAIRMAN  
 BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
 ALAN RYAN  
 CHAIRMAN  
 BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
 ALAN RYAN  
 CHAIRMAN  
 BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
 ALAN RYAN  
 CHAIRMAN  
 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

THE INMATES SO FAR HAVE ENCOUNTERED NO ARMED RESISTANCE. THE YET UNENCOUNTERED EASTERN ARAB POWERS, TECHNOCRATIC WEAPONRY HAS BECOME ITSELF MENACE AGAINST THE ALIENS.



REPORTS HAVE IT THAT  
ARMY PERSAC OFFICER WAS  
KILLED AND IS BURNING.  
P. 30. THIS WARMS TO THE  
NEW MAJOR U.S. CITY  
DOWN IN ENEMY HANDS.

ACROSS THE WORLD, THE U.S.A. IS  
REPORTED TO HAVE COLLAPSED UNDER  
THE HEAVY DEBASTATING ASSAULT IT'S  
BEEN SUBJECTED TO FROM THE ONSET  
OF ALIEN AGGRESSIONS.

ALL COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE  
PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF GEORGIA  
HAVE CEASED. THE WORST IS FEARED  
AND THERE ARE UNCONFIRMED  
REPORTS THAT THE ISLAND OF  
JAMAICA HAS BEEN SUNK.

DISPATCHES FROM  
THE DARK NATIONS  
TELL OF HUNDREDS  
OF MILES OF BURNING  
REFINERIES AND  
OIL FIELDS.

BUT THE PRESIDENT AND CONGRESS CONTINUED  
TO PERSIST TODAY ON THE POLICY OF MAKING  
NUCLEAR WEAPONS AGAINST THE AGGRESSORS.  
NO CONCLUSION WAS REACHED.



THE PENNSYLVANIA CLAIMS THAT SPY SATELLITES  
THEY CONFISCATED REVEALS THAT AUSTRALIA  
IS BEING USED AS A BASE OF OPERATIONS  
BY THE ENEMY.

TOP MILITARY OFFICIALS  
ARE FURNISHING FOR AN  
IMMEDIATE ATOMIC  
OPERATION ON THE  
DOWN UNDER.

MEANWHILE, ON  
THE SPACES, SOME  
ARE ABOUT CLOSED.

THIS CAN'T BE  
HAPPENING, PLEASE.  
IT HAS TO BE SOME  
KIND OF JOKE. A  
MISTAKE.

I AM AFRAID  
IT'S NOT A MISTAKE  
OR A JOKE. GOD  
HELP US. I THINK  
IT'S REAL.

OH PLEASE,  
GOD. ARE  
WE GOING  
TO DO IT?

I DON'T  
KNOW  
LAUREN.  
I JUST  
DON'T  
KNOW.

ARE

BEARS, WHAT  
ABOUT JAWWY?  
SHE'S ONLY 15.  
HEARD OLD

SURE, THINGS  
LOOK BAD, BUT  
THEY LOOKED  
BAD BACK IN  
DECEMBER '61  
AND THE  
OLD JAWWY  
GOT US OUT  
OF THAT RIG.

THEY'LL  
DO THE  
SAME  
NOW.

NOW,  
HOLD ON  
THERE!

DON'T YOU TWO  
THINK YOU'RE  
SEEING A LITTLE  
CRAZY IN  
THERE?

YOU  
REALLY  
THINK SO,  
PORT?

SURELY, BEHOLD,  
THESE FORMER SAILORS  
ARE ATTEMPTING  
CITY. WHAT WOULD  
THEY WANT HERE IN  
CONCRETE JUNGLES?

WE'VE GOT NO  
CITIES OR MILITARY  
BASES WITHIN RANGES  
OF US HERE. ALL  
CONCRETE HAS IS BARREN  
COWS AND FARMERS.

NOW WHY WOULD  
ANY ALIEN COME  
CRASHING AROUND HERE?  
WHY, THEY

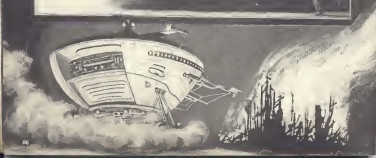
OH,  
GOD?



MAC



BOB









AN  
ONSAURIAN?

GRAB UP THE GIL-  
ZA, THEN BACK OFF!

THE ZROGHEW  
JADESMITH AND  
I HAVE MATTERS  
TO SETTLE.

NEED  
WE DO.

YOU'VE BEEN SLAYING  
DESTRUCTIONIST?



ARRRG!

BY RA'S HOLY EYE,  
I'VE LOST TEN HUNDRED  
YOU JAXXONS FROM DELSA'S ARMY!





FORTUNATELY YOUR ARM IS  
A SO TYPICALLY  
GEOMETRIC  
SYMMETRY



MASTER ANKHON,  
YOU'RE ANKHOED.

YES, DURING  
MY OWN  
FALL AND  
FOOLISHNESS.

DUELING WITH  
A DESTINY - WHAT  
MONUMENTAL  
STUPIDITY?

WE'VE TEND TO  
BE ANKHOED LATER.  
WE HAVE TO GET  
OUT OF HERE



THE  
SPHERE  
WILL  
BE HERE  
MOMENTARILY  
AND...



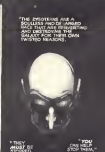
I'VE A  
SURPRISE  
FOR THEM.

THEN YOU -  
ARMY IT  
WITH THE  
WARRIORS



NO CHILD, WE  
ARE YOUR ENEMY'S  
ENEMY.

I AM  
AN ANKHOED  
OF ANKHOED  
AND





IT'S THE  
JULIET

IT'S BETTER  
THIS WAY

Mutants' Odyssey continues next issue



possibly just doesn't fit in anymore. But for now, I've won.

The road grew brighter, jutting him, looking straight ahead. Steve could make out a bright light on the horizon. At least he wasn't the only fast driver on this lonely back road. Only, as the light grew more intense, it didn't look like a car.

The light appeared to be above the road, not on it, too high for an airplane, whether. A low flying plane? His heart began to race. His palms grew damp, hammering his grip on the wheel.

It was almost directly on him. Back just blinding.

The driver's trying to hit me? He slammed on the brakes. The car went sliding, skidding sideways. Finally coming to a halt full onto the shoulder.

Shaken, dizzy, Steve raised his head, slowly and beheld a great shaft of light that flooded the ground all around the car. He felt a desire, a compulsion, to step into its light. Hardly had he felt it than he was doing it. Enveloped by the light, Steve looked up. Somewhere above him was the ship. Huge enough to make scale and distance impossible to judge.

He felt a sense of melting, of fading away, losing physical sensation. In between pure thought.

Then he was no longer on the road, but standing inside the ship, palace of its magnificence, walls lined with shelves of equipment, great banks of control consoles spread out around him. And waiting was a figure. Humanoid. Hair silver, face stately, unfurled but somehow showing great age.

"Welcome, my friend. While your presence is one with my ship, I am able to communicate with you, in your language. You have come in response to our ad. Do not be afraid. I am the Elder. I seek your help."

Steve stood frozen, unable to respond. From beyond the stately figure, three short creatures entered the chamber. They were distinctly unhumanoid.

"Do not be alarmed," the Elder said, "these are merely my servants. Come, let me show you some wonders."

He led Steve toward one of the walls with shelf after shelf of glass-like, polished containers, filled with what looked to be tiny sparks.

"Within these crucibles are the electronic essences of some of the greatest minds of my race. It is much the same process as you went through to get inside here. You see, my planet is suffering greatly from a lack of energy."

"An energy crisis," Steve said.

"Exactly." The Elder pointed to the great ship's interior. "All this technology—the billions of light-years I've traveled—All are for the sole purpose

of finding a new energy source. All the supreme intellects contributed within the crucibles are just waiting to be reassembled at the right time."

"But what do you want with me?"

Before he received an answer, Steve began to rise off the floor. Every object not in some way fastened down began to float and drift, clattering the rails. Through the swirling debris, Steve saw the Elder swarming toward his servants.

"The switch," he was yelling, "TURN THE SWITCH!"

For a moment there was silence. Then a tremendous crash. Steve found himself suddenly sprawled on the floor. Rubble was everywhere. The Elder's voice echoed through the chamber.

"How many times have I told you not to fool with the emergency controls? You three will never learn."

From where he sprawled on the floor the Elder turned in Steve's direction. His eyes fell on the great quantities of broken glass among the rubble.

"The... crucibles?"

The Elder looked from the glass to the ceiling. Steve followed his gaze. Millions of tiny sparks danced in the chamber's upper reaches.

"All a lost!" the Elder cried.

"No it's not," Steve pointed to the shelves. "There are still many left."

"Is the name Contarac Dariusus among them?"

Steve scanned the remaining rows of containers. "His story, his name's not here."

"Just as well," the Elder murmured under his breath. "he was always a troublemaker anyway."

Steve cleared his throat. "We were talking about why you needed me?"

"For your knowledge, of course," the Elder explained to be sure and faced Steve. "And for what you can bring us from your homeworld. It's known that we need desperately."

"Forgotten! A true-unknown element! I doubt if there's ever been even a thought produced on Earth."

The Elder's stately face grew red. He swung himself around and stomped across the floor, hitting away the many small sparks that continued to swirl the air like mosquitoes. Steve followed him. They halted at the end of a large star map projection.

"Is this not the fourth planet of the Andromeda Galaxy?" the Elder demanded as he pointed to a small dot on the chart.

"No," Steve replied. "It's not."

As the Elder's shoulders sagged Steve thought of the stack of newspapers on his car seat, and of the one lone job ad he had called into them.

"Have you ever considered," Steve asked, "the possibility of replacing those three servants?"

## DETOUR

Art and Story by George Bush

**T**he headlights cut through the night like a knife, searching out the eternal ribbon of road. Steve was tired. His eyes burned, his body ached. His movements and reactions had become automatic, one with the car bringing him closer to his destination still. Steve thought as he rounded yet another curve, it could all be worth it.

He reached for the clipboard atop the pile of newspapers on the seat beside him. By the dashboard, he could only make out the bold words: HELP WANTED. Reading it again wouldn't do anything. It would still be vague as the first time, yet somehow strangely suited to him.

Steve concentrated on the area he was approaching. Nothing but darkness in all directions. He tapped his high beams. They revealed a ditch, smaller road than he expected.

Some sort of short cut or temporary bypass.

His thoughts went back to the new job. Not actually his yet, but with the sting of bad luck behind him, he win that he had to be.

Not much call for sending a man to the moon anymore. Or any place else. Cubesats orbited all this. People with my



# TOPAZ

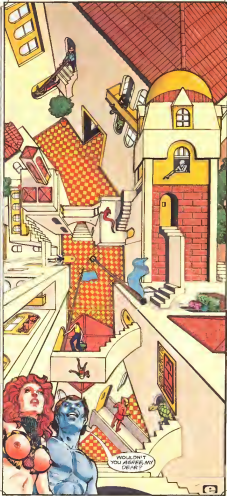
BY CHARL POTS







BY ARTISTICALLY  
ALTERING THESE LAWS  
MY WORK ACHIEVES  
PROPER FEELING  
AND PERSONAL  
EXPRESSION



WOULDN'T  
YOU HEAVEN, MY  
DEAR?

## NEXT ISSUE:

Cover by Richard Corben

An all-new science-fiction adventure from Samuel Delany & Howard Chaykin

Robert E. Howard's *Albion* by Roy Thomas & Tom Conrad

P. Craig Russell brings his unique graphics to Richard Wagner's *Siegfried*

Jim Starlin's *Metamorphosis* *Odyssey* continues, now in full color

All these plus Steve Bissette, Rick Veitch, Archie Goodwin, Robert Wakein,

Dana Graziunas, Ernie Colón, and many, many more

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# epic

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# ENDGAME

contributors

**P**utting together the first issue of a magazine is an exciting thing. The promise and potential of *Epic* discussed by editor/publisher Stan Lee in his editorial are a large part of that excitement. So too, for us, are the physical contents, from the unloving cover by Frank Frazetta (and along with Frank, we should thank Elie Hertz, whose cooperation made getting the cover possible) to designer Norm MacLin's layout and typography for this very page. We're excited, but, in the contrary way of editorial folk, not quite satisfied. Though material for *Epic* has been underway for the better part of a year, Milt Schiffman, our production V.P., still had to almost rip some of the pages from our hands lest we start redesigning a page or reconsidering the line-up (which has been made and remade more times than the beds at a Holiday Inn). What edition want, particularly in a first issue, is perfection. Naturally, we never quite achieve it. Hopefully, we'll come a little bit closer with each succeeding *Epic*. The hardest part of questing for this particular Holy Grail was disappointing the artists and writers who had counted on being part of the first issue but then found their jobs taken out in the name of format, pacing, and editorial paranoia. Did we make all the right choices? That'll probably still be debated long after *Epic* 1 is a plastic-bagged collector's item on someone's closet shelf. So, before going on to talk about some of this issue's contributors, we'd like to thank those other contributors whose jobs are still waiting in the wings. If future *Epics* are also collector's items, it'll be due to them.

If space was at such a premium this time around, how is it that we devoted so many pages to one story, *Metamorphosis Odyssey*? Well, aside from the fact that we've been crazy about Jim Starlin's art and writing since he was doing *Captain Marvel* (No, not the one who yells Shazam!) and *Warlock* in our regular comic books, it seemed any magazine called

*Epic* ought to have at least one feature which genuinely reflected that in scope and proportion. With its storylines of war and vengeance on a cosmic scale, *Metamorphosis Odyssey*, planned by Jim to run some twelve to fifteen chapters, deftly fills the bill. We realize a continuing series in a quarterly book leaves a long wait between installments, so we decided to start off with a large chunk to whet your interest. And if the conclusion of Chapter III doesn't imprint itself strongly enough to carry you over to *Epic* 2, then we've destroyed an entire world for nothing.

Doing graphic stories (as more serious types are apt to call comics) generally requires that the artist perform all the functions which in a play or film would be spread among a director, actors, set designer, and costume department. Ray Rue seems more qualified than most to step into all those shoes. Born Raymond Wrublewski in 1931, Ray was raised in Lumberton, New Jersey. A self-taught artist, he began his career back in the psychedelic studios as a body painter at New York's Electric Circus. In 1969, he went to Boston to study acting, and worked there for some

in 1972, he cos authored a children's musical fables and tales, which became a Play of the Month Club selection. His work has appeared in *Heavy Metal*, *Boston Magazine*, and *Playbill*. "Lullaby of Bedlam" marks his debut as a writer of fantasy.

New Jersey is also the birthplace of Arthur Suydam, author and illustrator of "Heads." He too is largely self-taught, starting drawing at the age of 4 by studying art books. Other self-studies included the Famous Artists course. Through it, Albert Dome and Norman Rockwell became influences on his work. In 1969, at the ripe old age of 17, Art almost had work accepted by Warren Publications, until they learned how old he was and suggested he come back in a year after finishing high school. Instead, he showed up unannounced at DC comics, impressing their editorial staff with his moody approach to horror stories and gaining him a prompt assignment in their House of Secrets title. Used to writing his material, he found the awkwardness of following a scriptwriter's art directions frustrating. This, combined with restrictions on the size of working originals, resulting in his taking six months to do that first story. Later

Bonus in 1966, but his time-line approach to political fantasy seems to transcend any lead or language. A graduate of the School of Applied Arts in Zagreb, Ilie's new works on comics, newspaper illustrations, and poster design. Prior to this, he worked for Zagreb Film. His comics have been published since 1975 in youth papers as well as official newspapers. Recently, he formed a group of young Yugoslavian comics designers, *Novkavrad*. Ilie has participated in 13 collective and one individual exhibition and was awarded first prize in the First Yugoslavian Comic Strip Competition.

The end of the column is rapidly approaching and we haven't had time to go into detail about a great many contributors who deserve full coverage, such as Bob Larson and George Duish, both well regarded paperback illustrators who, this time out, write as well. Nor have we spotlighted Carl Potts, who divides his time between advertising illustration and comics, Wendy Pini, who writes, illustrates, and publishes her own popular limited press fantasy series, *Elquest*, Eric Colon, whose work has covered an incredible range from *Richie Rich* to Warren horror stories to



Artist Ray Rue



His creation, Faustine



What artist Art Suydam

year, years. His roles have included Renfield in *Dracula* and Rasputin in *The Penal Colony*. During this time he worked as a freelance illustrator, a scenic and costume designer, and eventually was creative director for two Boston advertising agencies. Ray has also been an animator for Laburger Studios working on a number of award-winning films for WGBH and for the ABC television network

offered their successful Swamp Thing character. Art decided he'd never be able to make the deadlines and turned from mainstream comics to successfully writing and illustrating his own stories. His work now appears regularly in *National Lampoon*, *Heavy Metal*, and, if we have anything to say about it, *Epic*.

Mirko Ilie was born in Bjeljska Socialist Republic of

Bjelovar Galiciana without incurring more than the mildest schizophrenia, or John Buscema, Leo Duranico, Rudy Nebres, and Rick Veitch. However, since we're looking for reappearances by all these talented people in the future, we'll make a promise to you and them to shed a bit more light in issues to come, starting with *Epic Illustrated* 2. See you then.

Archie Goodwin